

# GRANT CONCEPT MEMO

**SUBJECT:** Small Parcel Hazardous Fuel Reduction      **DATE:** April 7, 2005

Appen. #2

**ORIGINATED BY:** CDF San Bernardino Unit      **REQUEST TO:** USFS

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**PROBLEM:** The need for private landowners to reduce hazardous fuels within and around the communities in the San Bernardino National Forest (BDF) mountain areas. Educating and instilling ownership in the private landowners of the process of fuel reduction so they can help maintain the dynamic ecosystem of the forest and ultimately reduce their dependency on public funds to maintain a fire safe community in the future.

## **PROJECT CONCEPT:**

- ❑ \$4.0 (from a total of 4.9m) million federal dollars are available from the Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service for the San Bernardino National Forest area. Funds will be granted to The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and the Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance (IEFSA) for the development and implementation of an incentive program for the thinning of pre-commercial, green trees on private, residential, forested lots.
- ❑ The program is designed to provide a financial incentive to private landowners within BDF and on parcels less than 5 acres to reduce hazardous fuels and promote a healthy forest. Priority will be given to a landowner whose property lies within ¼ mile of the boundary of the National Forest.
- ❑ An application by the landowner and verification by grant personnel that the land is a viable project within the scope of the grant funds will begin the process. Once the project is approved the landowner will be responsible for completing the work according to the specified standards. Once the work is complete a reimbursement form will be submitted by the landowner to the entity controlling the reimbursement funds. Then, verification of the project meeting the program standards will be documented and noted for reimbursement to the private landowner. Reimbursement will be at 75% of the private landowner's costs or the maximum cap rate, whichever is less.
- ❑ The 25 % match will be achieved in the landowner's 25% match. It is anticipated that landowners will incur more than the 25 % of the match required for their projects.

**DESIRED OUTCOME:** Fuel reduction on private land by encouraging private landowners to reduce fuels in the short term and to maintain the fuel reduction in the long term. Education of the landowners of the benefits of fuel reduction for fire safety of their property and the community as well as the benefits of a healthy forest.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS:

CDF will become the grantee of \$910,000 of the \$4.0 million available and will perform the following:

- 1) Contract with a consulting forestry firm for field evaluation of potential projects and confirmation of completed projects. Consultant will also participate in the education of landowners regarding fuel reduction and healthy forest management.
- 2) Complete the necessary environmental review through a combination of CDF staff work and contractors.
- 3) Develop the overall project and coordinate the interface of IEFSA, contractors, and landowners.
- 4) Oversight of the overall project and coordination with other hazardous fuel reduction projects in the area through additional staff positions (2.0) assigned to CDF.

The Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance will become the grantee of \$3.09 million of the \$4 million available in a cooperative role and will perform the following:

- 1) Provide staff for project administration, grant tracking, processing applications and contracts, promoting program with landowners, and phone contact with landowners.
- 2) Provide consulting forestry firm with necessary information to conduct field survey of projects, obtain signed contract, and review completed projects.
- 3) Development of an automated tool for documenting and tracking of potential landowner's participation, contracts, funds available, funds committed and funds expended. This tool will also be capable of generating reports for both CDF and IEFSA grant reporting.

**Pro:** The bulk of the funds are directed to the IEFSA which can most efficiently develop the infrastructure to direct the greatest dollar amount to on the ground work. The CDF's experience in managing fuel reduction and forest health projects is capitalized on without excessive encumbrance of government contracting processes. Retention of the consulting forestry firm under the CDF portion of the grant maintains direct oversight of the consultant by professional resource managers.